

Recommendations for 2003-2005

1. Improve and sustain the availability of community-level data by enhancing and supporting data collection systems that allow community-level analyses.

Meaningful information on health is specific for a community or group of people. When health data accurately describe the threats, behaviors, or opportunities that apply to you and your community, they provide a basis for action on local priorities and a basis for charting progress over time.

2. Develop a systematic process for collecting and publishing the Report Card data and examples of interventions, including collection and dissemination of data that can be used for communities and subgroups, such as race or ethnic groups or urban and rural residents.

Health improvement is a long-term strategy and must be sustained over time. Effective investments in health improvement must be supported by a continuous cycle of evaluation, measurement, and reporting.

3. Distribute the Report Card and action guide widely. Encourage public and private organizations to use the Report Card as they allocate resources and develop work plans to improve health outcomes.

Incorporate the Key Health Indicators into existing report cards. The health of all people in Washington depends on the actions of many partners, including public and private sectors, health care providers, and a broad range of community organizations. The Report Card provides all of them with opportunities to focus on innovative efforts that can result in better health, whether through health care, education, social support, or environmental changes.

4. Set numerical targets for the indicators that address the question, “How healthy do we want to be?”

Setting realistic numerical targets for health indicators, based in evidence from the best available science, will let us measure progress over time. Numerical measures will provide a clear picture of how healthy we are and where we are gaining—or losing—ground.